

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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R 122156Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1501
INFO AMEMBASSY SUVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: FR, FJ, CASC

SUBJECT: CONSULAR ACCESS TO FRENCH POLYNESIA

REF: A) MEMCON OF AMBASSADOR CONDON'S DISCUSSION
WITH MME. HAULPETIT-FOURICHON, US DESK OFFICER,
QUAI D'ORSAY, MARCH 21, 1978, B) PARIS 14679

1. MME. HAULPETIT-FOURICHON CALLED MAY 11 TO BRING US
UP-TO-DATE ON PROGRESS REGARDING OUR REQUEST FOR
EASIER ACCESS TO FRENCH POLYNESIA BY CONSULAR OFFICERS
STATIONED IN SUVA. MME. HAULPETIT FOURICHON RECALLED
THAT NORMAL FRENCH PRACTICE WAS TO PERMIT CONSULAR
FUNCTIONS TO BE CARRIED OUT ONLY BY OFFICIALS STATION-
ED IN FRANCE OR ITS OVERSEAS DEPARTMENTS AND
TERRITORIES. THIS WAS A FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE FOR FRANCE
SINCE IT WAS BASED ON THE WORLD-WIDE INTEGRITY OF FRENCH
REPUBLIC.

2. SINCE 1971, FRENCH HAD PERMITTED AN EXCEPTION TO
THIS BASIC PRINCIPLE FOR CONSULAR OFFICERS STATIONED IN
SUVA WHO WISHED TO CARRY OUT CONSULAR FUNCTIONS IN NEW
CALEDONIA OR FRENCH POLYNESIA. DESPITE THE FACT THAT
THESE OFFICIALS WERE NOT STATIONED IN FRANCE, THE FRENCH
ACCEPTED THAT THEY COULD PERFORM CONSULAR DUTIES IN NEW
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CALEDONIA OR FRENCH POLYNESIA, PROVIDED AUTHORIZATION
WAS OBTAINED THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS (I.E., EITHER
THROUGH FRENCH EMBASSY, WASHINGTON, OR US EMBASSY PARIS,
AND QUAI). MME. HAULPETIT-FOURICHON STRESSED THAT THE
SYSTEM WAS THE SAME FOR BOTH TERRITORIES.

3. SINCE THAT TIME, FRENCH HAVE NO RECORD THAT ANY

REQUEST FOR CONSULAR ACCESS HAS BEEN MADE, OR ANY OFFICIAL VISIT MADE BY CONSULAR OFFICIALS TO EITHER TERRITORY (THEIR RECORDS DO SHOW THAT US CHARGE D'AFFAIRES VISITED NEW CALEDONIA FOR ORIENTATION, BUT NOT FOR CONSULAR BUSINESS). FRENCH HAVE ASSUMED THROUGHOUT THIS PERIOD THAT CONSULAR NEEDS WERE LIMITED TO ISSUANCE OF VISAS AND THAT THIS WAS HANDLED THROUGH TRANSPORTATION COMPANIES WHO REFERRED VISA APPLICATIONS TO SUVA. (COMMENT: A RAPID CHECK OF OUR OWN RECORDS SHOWS THAT WE HAVE REQUESTED AND BEEN GRANTED CONSULAR ACCESS TO FRENCH POLYNESIA ON AT LEAST ONE OCCASION FOR OFFICIALS FROM SUVA -- THAT WAS IN 1975-76 ARREST CASE OF MURCHISON, MACDONALD AND LOCKWOOD. IN 1973, ON OUR REQUEST, A CONSULAR OFFICER FROM SIDNEY WAS GRANTED ACCESS TO PAPEETE. FRENCH NOTED ON THAT OCCASION THAT THEY WOULD HAVE PREFERRED AN OFFICIAL FROM SUVA. END COMMENT.)

4. MME. HAULPETIT-FOURICHON ALSO RECALLED 1973 FRENCH REQUEST THAT A US CONSULAR AGENT BE IDENTIFIED IN PAPEETE TO HANDLE GROWING DEMANDS FOR CONSULAR SERVICES THERE. SHE RECOGNIZED THAT THIS DID NOT APPEAR FEASIBLE AT THE MOMENT BUT REITERATED THAT IT REMAINED THE FRENCH PREFERENCE, SINCE IT WOULD CONFORM TO THE PRINCIPLE MENTIONED ABOVE. SHE DOUBTED THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR FRENCH TO AGREE TO A SYSTEM UNDER WHICH CONSULAR OFFICIALS FROM EMBASSY SUVA WOULD SIMPLY BE MADE KNOWN

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TO THE FRENCH AT THE OUTSET OF THEIR ASSIGNMENT THERE, AFTER WHICH THEY MIGHT TRAVEL FREELY TO NEW CALEDONIA AND FRENCH POLYNESIA TO PERFORM CONSULAR BUSINESS. SHE NEVERTHELESS SAID SHE PERSONALLY THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO GRANT US A FURTHER EXCEPTION AND AGREE TO A SYSTEM UNDER WHICH AUTHORIZATION COULD BE OBTAINED LOCALLY (I.E., EMBASSY SUVA MAKING REQUEST DIRECTLY TO FRENCH HIGH COMMISSION IN NOUMEA OR PAPEETE), RATHER THAN IN PARIS. SHE PROMISED TO KEEP US INFORMED OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF FRENCH THINKING ON THIS MATTER.

5. WE REPORT THIS INFORMATION IN SOME DETAIL IN VIEW OF EA/PIA DIRECTOR-DESIGNATE BODDE'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO NOUMEA AND PAPEETE. QUESTION OF CONSULAR ACCESS FROM SUVA HAS BEEN REVIEWED WITH FRENCH AUTHORITIES IN BOTH PLACES, AND IT IS LIKELY THAT THEY WILL WISH TO DISCUSS IT WITH BODDE.

HARTMAN

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